

ARTIE AND THE WOLF MOON

"A heartfelt, magical family drama you can really sink your teeth into."

—Nilah Magruder, *M.F.K.*



OLIVIA STEPHENS

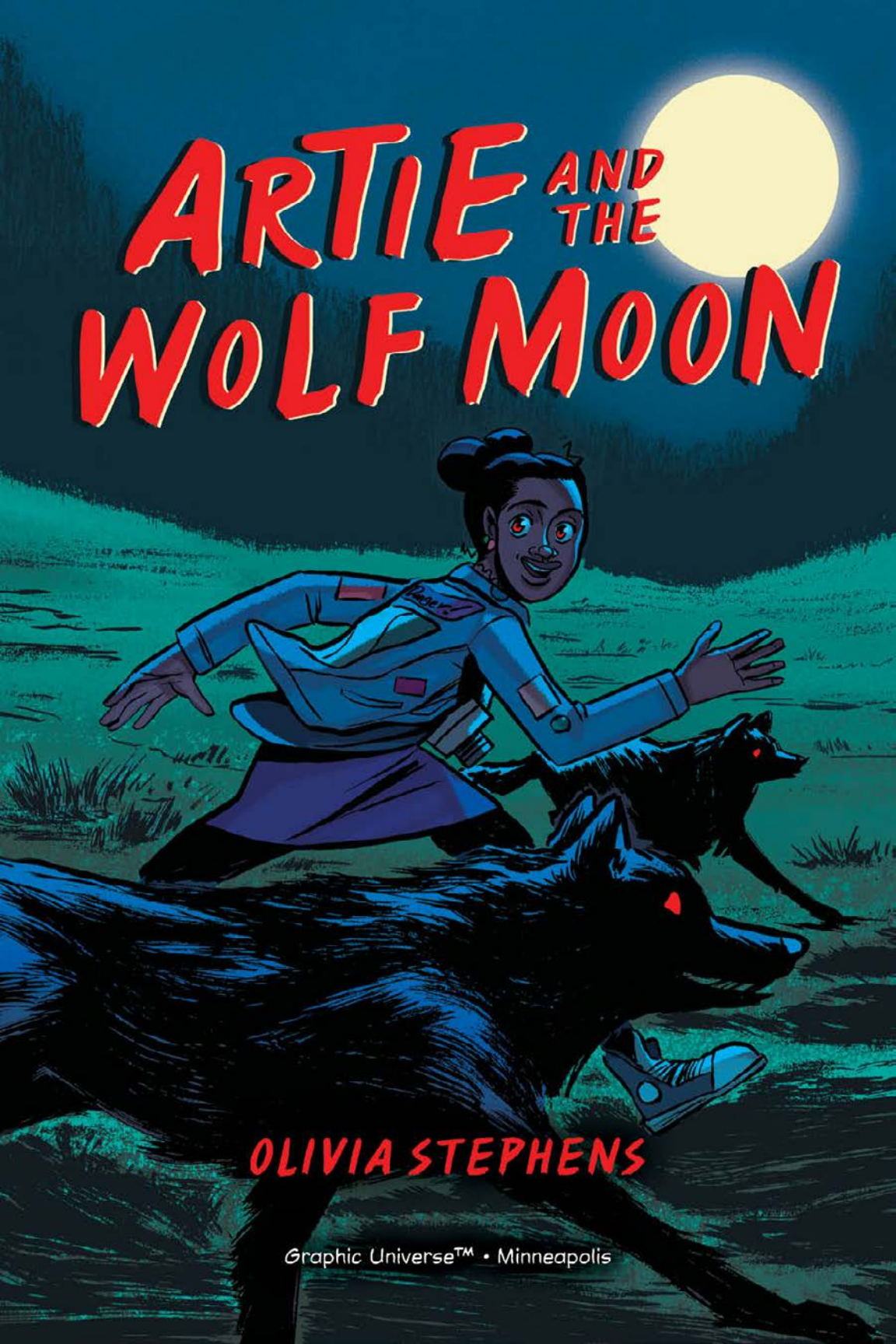
***AFTER SNEAKING OUT AGAINST
HER MOTHER'S WISHES,*** Artie Irvin

spots a massive wolf in the nearby woods. Then, she sees it shift into her mom. Thrilled to find she comes from a line of werewolves, Artie asks her mom to share everything—including the story of Artie's father.

To help Artie figure out her wolflike abilities, her mom recruits some old family friends. Artie thrives in her new community, even if she can't shift at will yet. But as she learns more about werewolves and her parents' past, she'll discover that wolves aren't the scariest thing in the woods—vampires are.



ARTIE AND THE WOLF MOON



OLIVIA STEPHENS

Graphic Universe™ • Minneapolis

FOR GLENDA

Copyright © 2021 by Olivia Stephens

Graphic Universe™ is a trademark of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.

All rights reserved. International copyright secured. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., except for the inclusion of brief quotations in an acknowledged review.

Graphic Universe™

An imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.
241 First Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55401 USA

For reading levels and more information, look up this title at
www.lernerbooks.com.

Designed by Kimberly Morales.

Main body text is set in *CCDaveGibbonsLower*.

Typeface provided by *Comicraft*.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Stephens, Olivia, author, illustrator.

Title: Artie and the wolf moon / Olivia Stephens.

Description: Minneapolis : Graphic Universe, [2021] | Audience: Ages 9–14 |

Audience: Grades 7–9 | Summary: "Artie Irvin is thrilled to discover she comes from a line of werewolves, but as she dives into her family history and figures out her new abilities, vampires wait in the shadows." —Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 202006443 (print) | LCCN 202006444 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781541542488 (library binding) | ISBN 9781728417516 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Graphic novels. | CYAC: Graphic novels. | Werewolves—Fiction. | Vampires—Fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.7.S7424 Ar 2021 (print) | LCC PZ7.7.S7424 (ebook) |
DDC 741.5/973—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/202006443>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/202006444>

Manufactured in the United States of America
1-45413-39526-3/23/2021



CHAPTER ONE





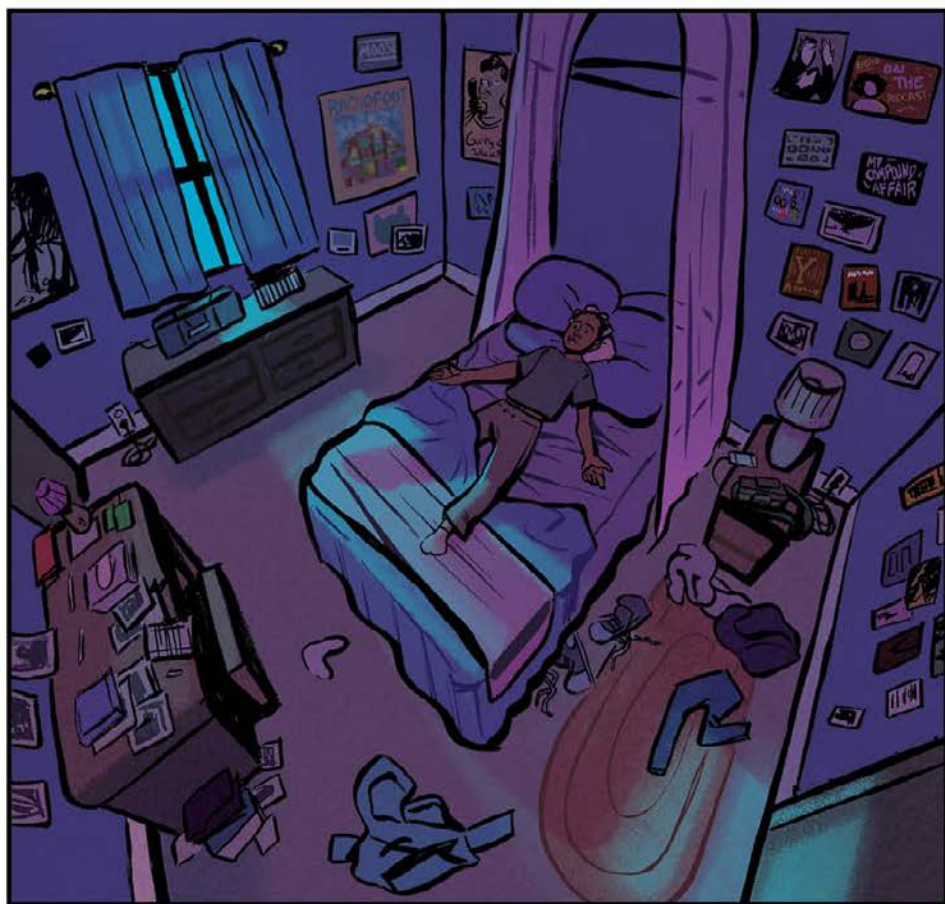










































It's late.
Let's get back to bed.
We can talk more
about this another
time.

Do you
mean that?



Yes.
Of course.

I'll tell you
all about wolves.
And other things.
Everything. You've got
my word, baby.



Okay.

Hey, Mom?

Did Dad know
about you?
What did he
think about it?



Yeah. He did.
I'll tell you
about that, too.
Promise.





CHAPTER TWO







You're gonna do it.
You're getting answers.
Today.



What? What do you guys want this time?



Hey!



Hmm.
Old and crappy.
Pretty on-brand
for you.



Don't.



Oops! Is that bad?
Maybe your dad can
fix it... Oh, wait.

Isn't he dead?

I heard he
just walked out
on 'em.

















After you *sink*, you *shift*.



KRAK

Try to relax.



Ease into the feeling.



There you go.











He liked being close to the action, so he arranged to stay in a spare cabin on the edge of this private reserve.



That reserve was part of the tiniest little town. Pineville, Washington. And the residents fiercely protected their woods.







So my mother gave him the keys, showed him around, and relayed the town's one rule for visitors.



Pineville curfew is 10 p.m.
That is a *strict* curfew.

Is that local law?

Ow.

Treat it like one.
You'll be glad you did.
Now what is the curfew,
Mr. Irvin?

Ten. Understood.
But there's like...
twenty people in this
whole town. Why
do you—

It's for civilian safety.
Lots of wild things
out in the reserve. We
take *safety seriously*
here, Mr. Irvin.







And *that's* how your father realized he was staying in a town of two hundred werewolves.

I-I promise, I will never, *e-ever* say a word. Th-*there* is *no* reason—I am *s-so* sorry about—







Sorry you have to babysit me.

Sure.



I just find it hard to believe no human before me has ever broken curfew.



Kelly.
You met my mother, right?



Every visitor meets her. Which is why, yeah, you're the first problem.



Right. And again, I'm sorry.

Less talk, more camera, and I'll try not to die of boredom over here.



There is *nothing* to do in Pineville. We're barely a town. We're barely... anything.













I thought I'd never see him again after that night.

But you did.



Yes. Against all odds.

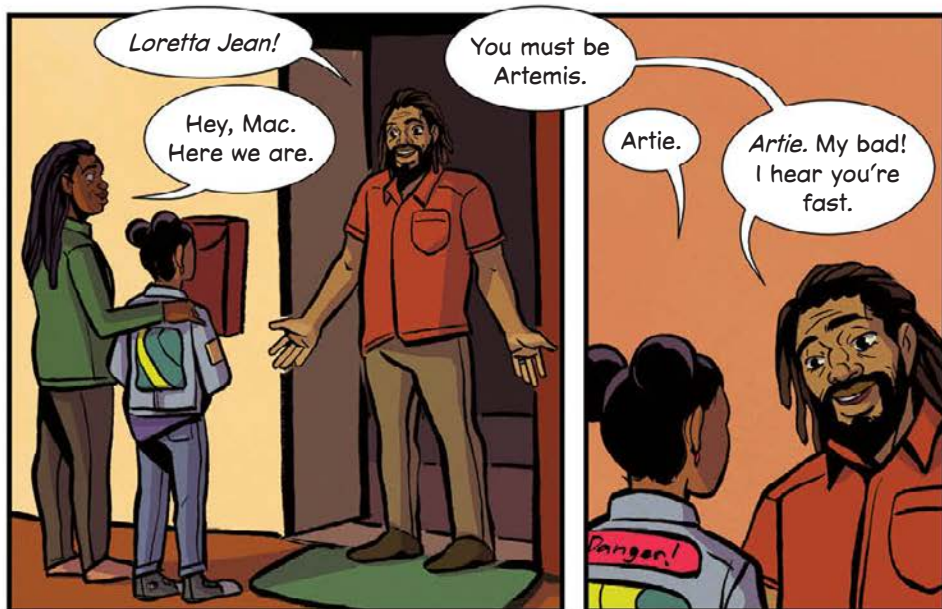




CHAPTER THREE































Okay. It doesn't seem like you need any work on *volume*. Maybe we'll work on, uh, restraint.



Let's shift.



Don't worry about everyone else. Focus on you, okay?

Think back on what you were feeling when you shifted that first time.

Okay, so try to go back to that moment.

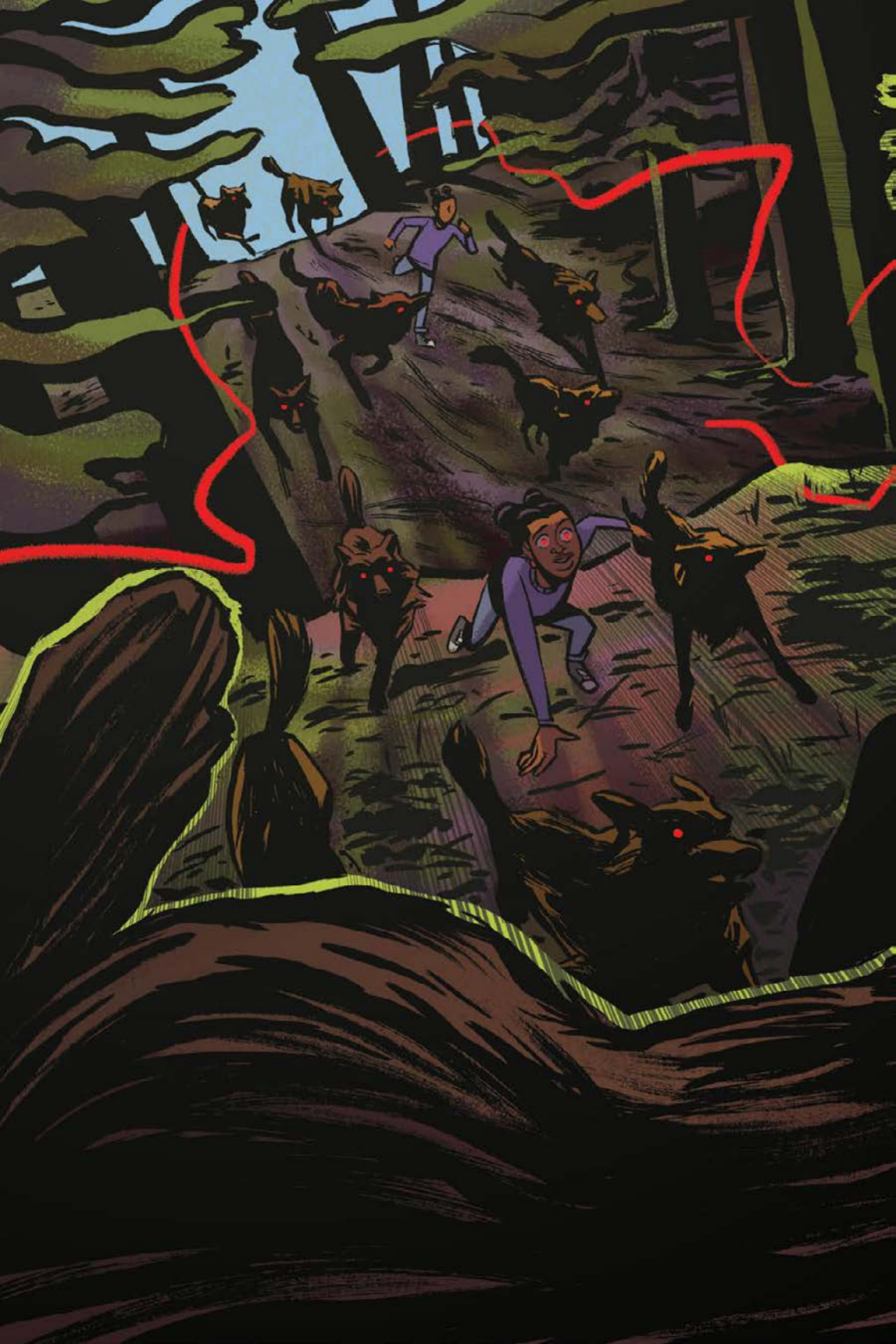
I was angry...



I don't want to.



It's fine, don't worry about it. Let's just have some fun, huh?











What's going on
with the freaky doodles
up there?

You...
don't know?















CHAPTER FOUR



There once was a woman who went into the woods with her three children.

They'd fled in the dead of night to escape their chains.



They ran for days. A storm came.
They almost froze. Nearly starved.

And that's when the
wolf approached.

But the woman was not afraid.
She saw herself in the wolf.

She saw a mother.



The wolf led the woman and her children to food and warmth.

After surviving the storm together, their bond was unspoken but unbreakable.

The wolf gave the woman and her three children the gift of transformation.
The gift of freedom.



When the storm cleared,
the light of a full moon
filled the sky.

And that is why we celebrate—
to honor that gift and the strength
of family, both real *and* chosen.

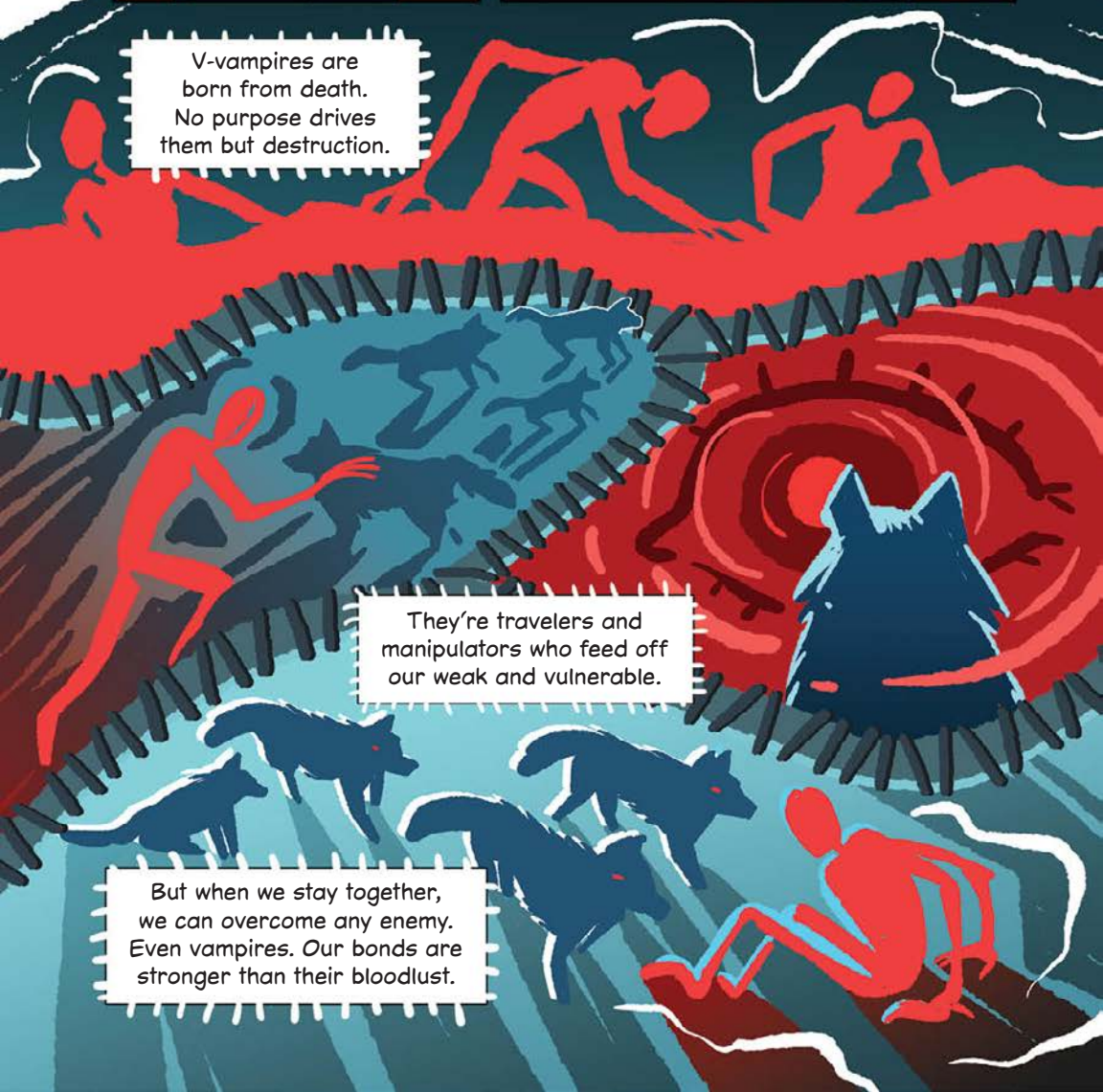


There are other clans
of werewolves out there, but
this woman and her children
were some of the first
leaders of our kind.





What about
vampires?



V-vampires are
born from death.
No purpose drives
them but destruction.

They're travelers and
manipulators who feed off
our weak and vulnerable.

But when we stay together,
we can overcome any enemy.
Even vampires. Our bonds are
stronger than their bloodlust.









And technically it was a friend picking me up.



For you.

Aw! They're-strong.

Ah, wolf nose. Right. Whoops.

Thank you. It was a sweet thought.



These are new.

heh

It's for the vampires. You said they don't like silver.



tch



Don't worry. I'll protect you.



Six months after a boy in town went missing, he came back. The moon was full. We were celebrating.



Be a good boy and turn off the lights.



Ben?
Is that you?
Is that him?

Ben!
Are you okay!?
We've been looking
everywhere
for you!



BEN!



SMASH!



Vampires always go after the children first. They're cowards like that.



AAAAAH!



They're in the square!
They took the lights out!



Stay here
and lock
the door.





Oh no.

What's going on?



You need to get out of here.

Loretta—

Go! Now! I'll be fine!

KRAK











It was more than a year before he came back to Pineville.

And these are all kinda like the border lights you already use at night, but remote controlled.

Click here and you're all set.

I've been working on some ideas about how you can use solar panels as backups for your generators too.

Why have you done all this?

I just—I want to prove to you that I can help.

I can contribute to this town.

I want to earn your blessing. Whatever it takes. I love your daughter.











Loretta...



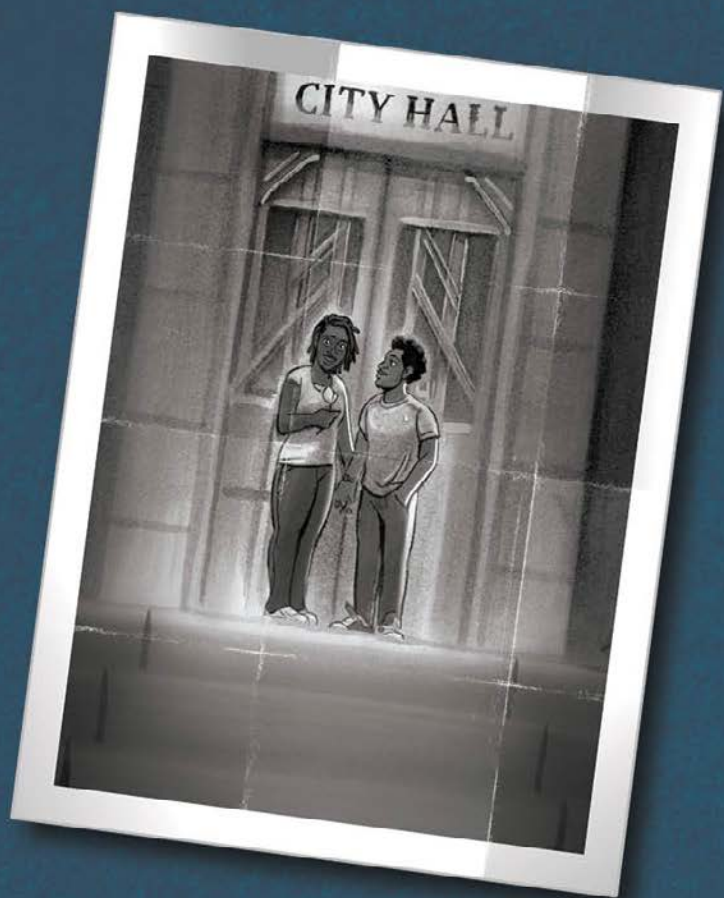
Dad...

I'm sorry
about all of it.
Everything I said.
Everything that
happened.

I know.



Artie.
Your dad was
a good man.
I wish I could've
told him that.





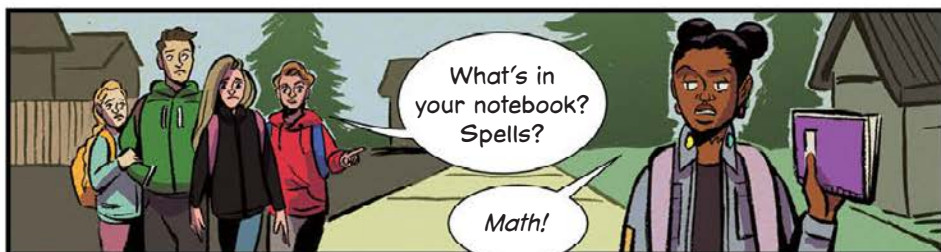
CHAPTER FIVE























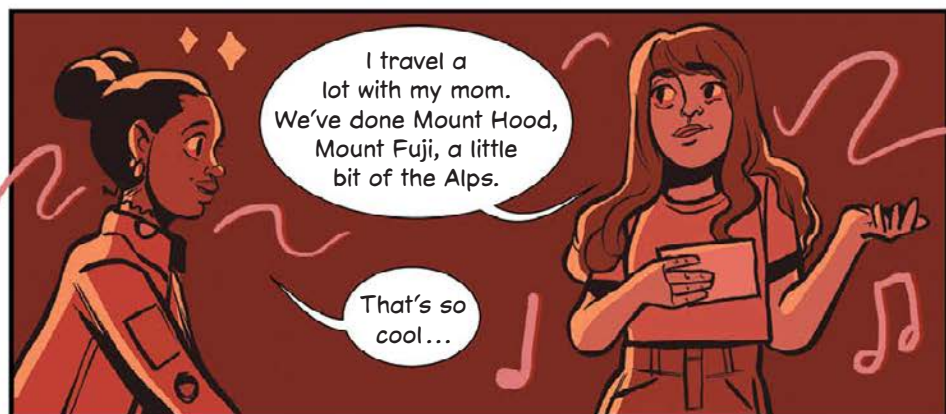




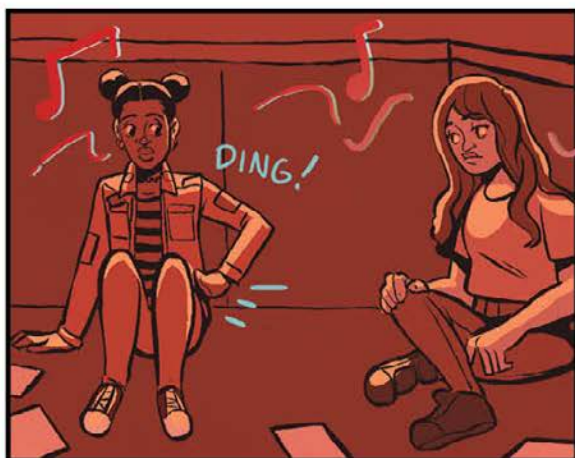






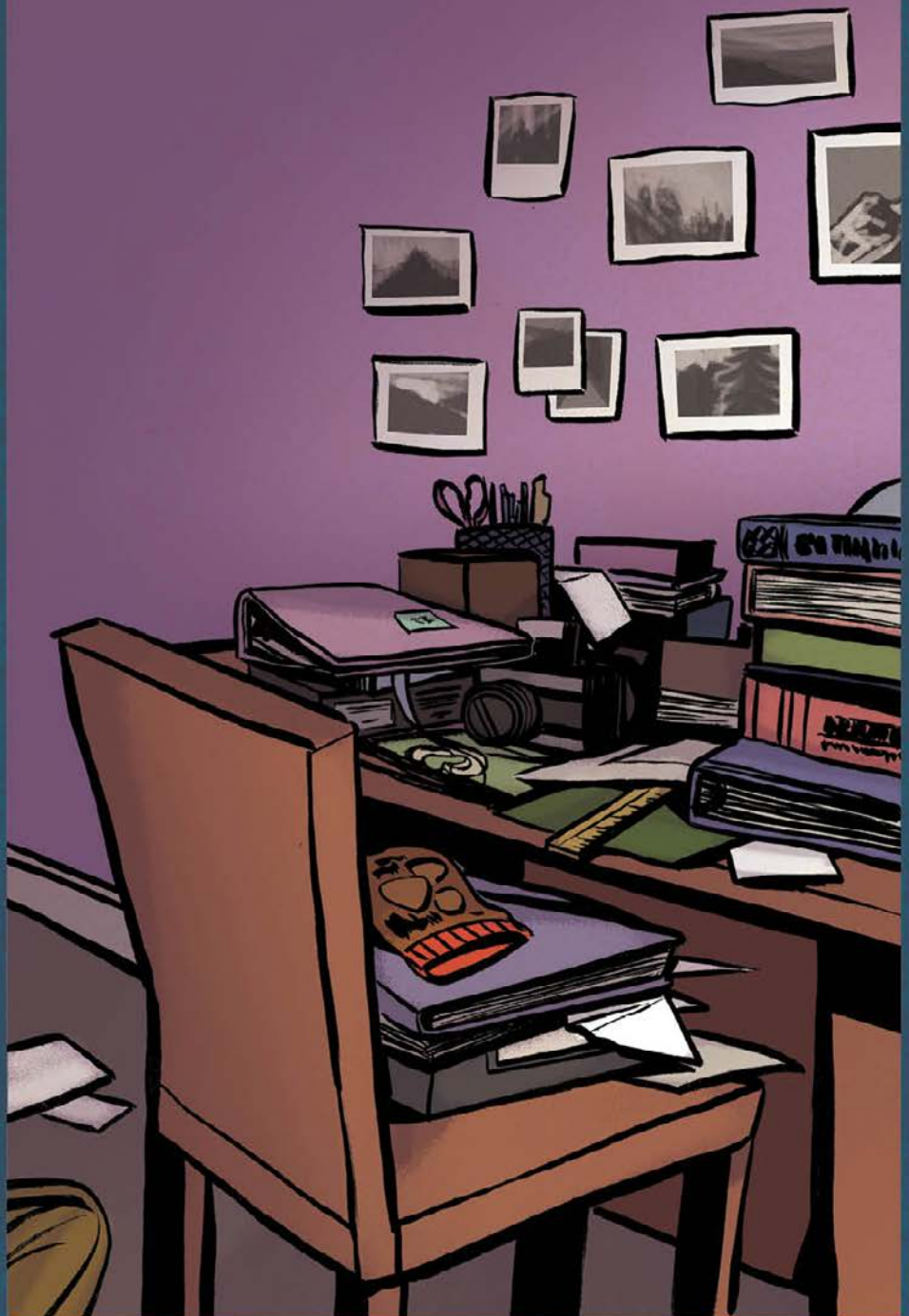








CHAPTER SIX





CAT 4:33 pm: are you busy tonight?

ARTIE 4:35 pm: what time

4:35 pm: like 11?

Late January



4:36 pm: past my curfew

4:38 pm: just sneak out then

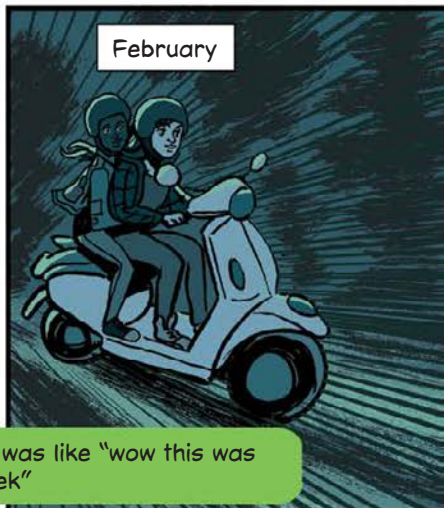


6:48 pm: did u see this already

6:52 pm: lol YES i was screaming



6:55 pm: i was like "wow this was us last week"



February



11:06 pm: last night was awesome

11:08 pm: did u get a good video?? Send it!



7:04 pm: im just saying you don't have to act like a baby around my friends



i'm sorry, i didn't mean to be.



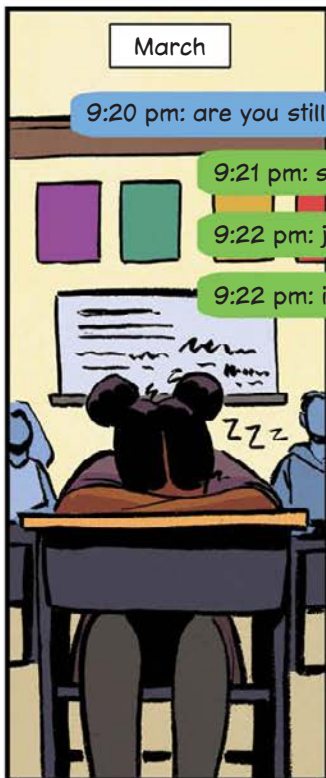
March

9:20 pm: are you still mad at me

9:21 pm: stop asking me that

9:22 pm: just show up this weekend

9:22 pm: im tired of you flaking





Artie, school called.



You've been falling asleep in class?

Only a few times. It's not a big deal...



Is everything okay with you?



...

I'm fine, Mom.



I'm really glad you're making new friends.

But we still gotta talk to each other if something's going on. We're a family. We communicate.





How much longer?

It's close.



I haven't seen a lot of you lately.

We... I miss hanging out with you.



Can you really miss me when we barely even know each other?

What are you talking about?



It's not like we have anything else in common.

If I wasn't a wolf, would we even be... forget it.





Has your mom told you yet why you can't kill a vampire?

Uh... no?

It only makes more.



A vampire's bite alone won't change someone, only drain them.

Maybe un-shift a wolf. But it stays with anyone the vampire kills, like a mark.

And when you kill a vampire...

...all its past victims rise from the grave.

Destroying one could mean that fifty others rise in its place.

That's how every vampire is born. From death.



And that's why we bind them in silver chains, put them in a box, and lay them back to sleep.

Down there.





Aaahh, girl,
it's been forever!



This is
your aunt?

Yeah.
Aunt Valerie lives
over in the city
because...



Because
what?

Well,
my dad said
it's cuz she's
bougie.

HA!



And I *never*
thought I was ever
seeing you again!



Oh.
She's gorgeous,
Retta.





The pack acquired the whole building a few years back.



There's still some renovations they need to finish...



But it is now the biggest urban complex exclusive to werewolves. Discreetly, of course.

Congrats.



Where's the woods, though? Where do you all go to be wolves?

Not everyone wants—

Freedom?



—the same life that you do.

And some of us define freedom differently, Darius.



We're wolf and human. Why should we limit ourselves to one way of living?

Ooooooooooh...









...I'm so wired from all that sugar, y'all.

You want to take the truck on a test drive?



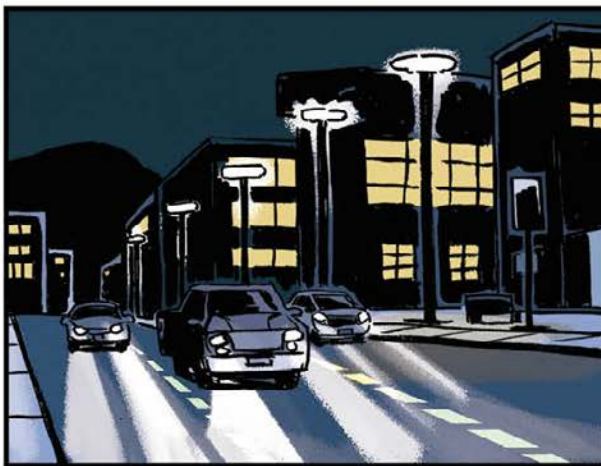
I just wanna go out. Anywhere. Like, it's our birthday.

And our present outside is so pretty. And lonely.



Okay. Let's do it.









What's going on?

ARTIE,
HE'S A VAMPIRE!
WE GOTTA GET
OUT OF HERE!

Wha...



Little brat...





Y'all could have died tonight! Do you understand that?

You have a car for *one* night and you forget everything me and your mother have taught you? Unbelievable!



H-he said he knew Artie, and that, t-that she was all alone, so I threw—



We need to leave. Right now. We have to—

Loretta, it's okay. Everyone is okay. Artie's fine—

HUFF
HUFF









6:34 pm:
we still hanging out tonight?

8:26 pm:
where are you??

9:05 pm:
???

10:48 pm:
wow. idk why i bother.

10:50 pm:
loser.

12:41 am:
im sorry cat. i can't.

12:42 am:
i can't. please stay safe, okay?



CHAPTER SEVEN



I hope I didn't
freak you out too
bad last night.

Are we really
moving?

I...
don't know
yet.



We're
born to be
protectors.



Wolves
protect our families.
Blood and otherwise.



But being
protectors also
puts a target on
our backs.



And vampires
will strike at
the first sign of
weakness.

After me and your father got married, we more or less tried to fall off the face of the earth.



Those first two years, we were always on the move.

Following whatever photography gig could pay for groceries.



I'd sniff out the best spots for your father, and he'd shoot.

And on the weekends, we'd work weddings.



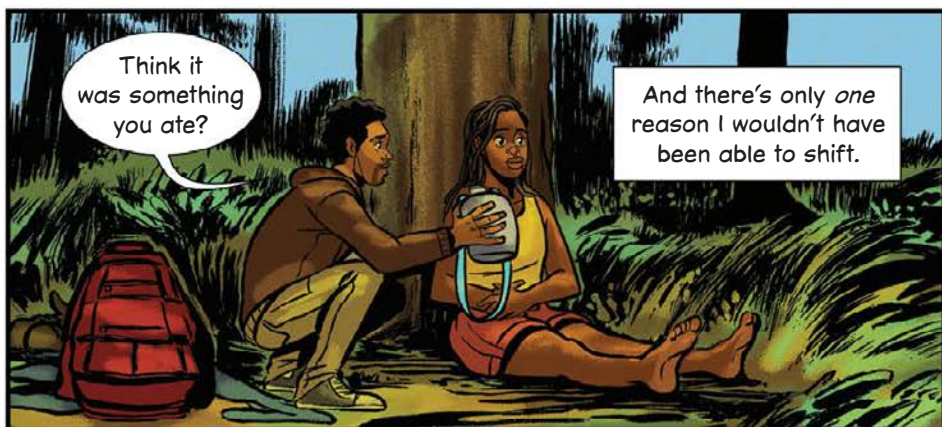
Last dance?



We were a good team.





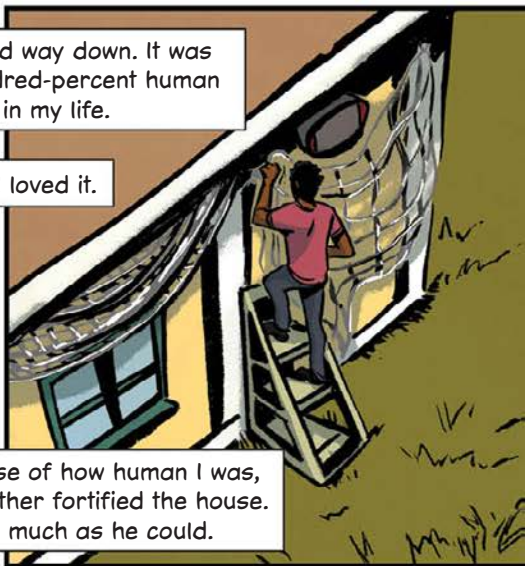




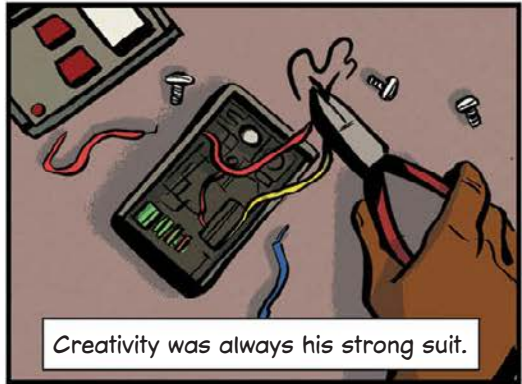


I couldn't shift. I slowed way down. It was the closest to one-hundred-percent human I'd ever been in my life.

And I loved it.



Because of how human I was, your father fortified the house. As much as he could.



Creativity was always his strong suit.

















No matter what happens, we keep this car moving. Okay?

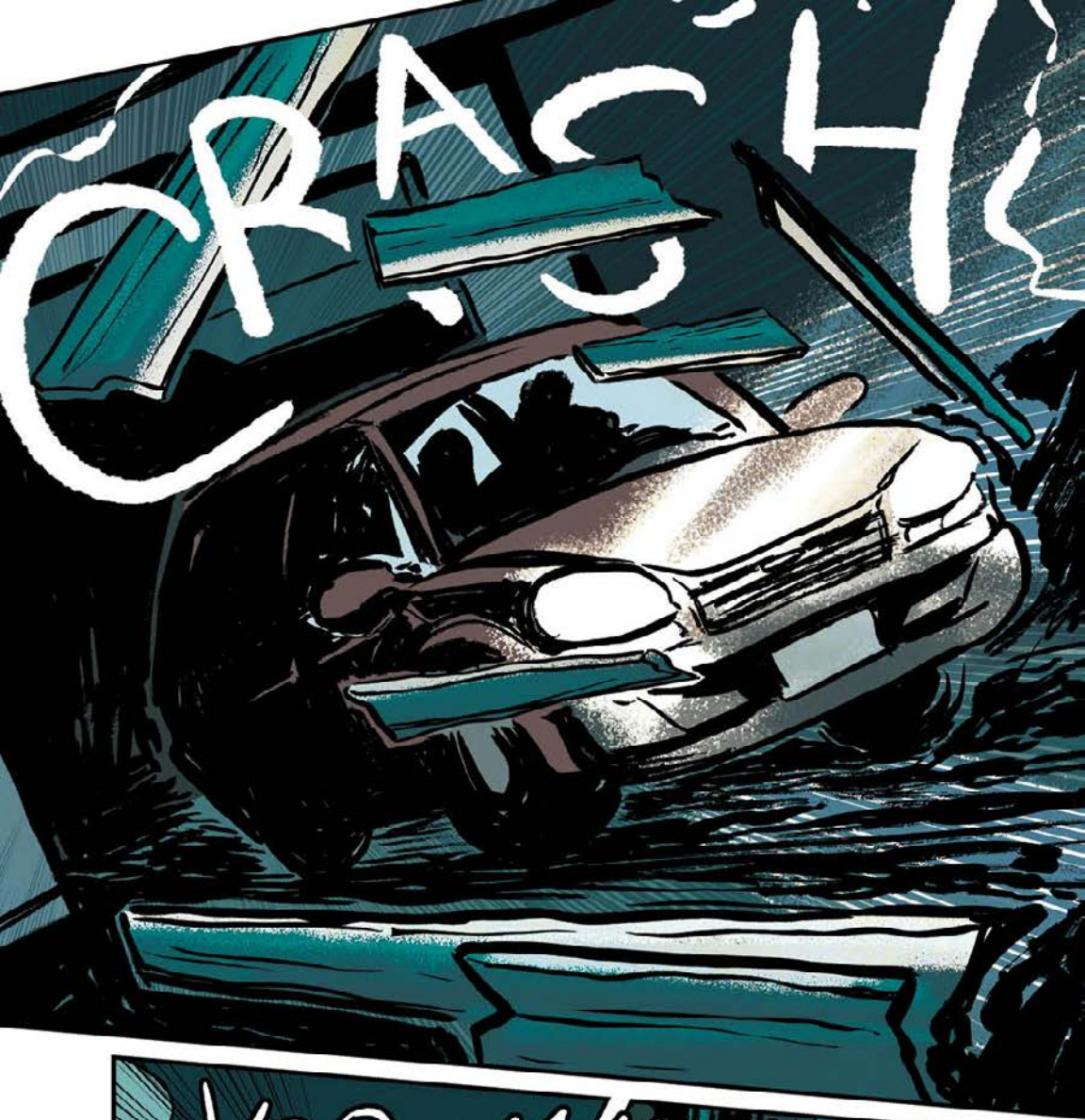
Okay.

I love you.

I love you too.



VROOOM







LORETTA!
YOU HAVE TO
DRIVE! NOW!

I-I can't! Not
without y—



It's okay.

Keep the
car moving!
Okay?







That was the last time
I saw your father.











But after that night with
your father... I knew I'd never
want you to live this kind of life.
Werewolves. Vampires. None of it.
Not if I could help it.



It took some time, but I found a
job and a new house in a new
town. New everything. I packed
everything up, and we left.



Wait. So Dad...
could've escaped
from the coven?

He could still
be out there.
Right?

Artie,
I don't...

You don't know
if he's dead!?







CHAPTER EIGHT





I'm not giving up on him.
I have to try.



Maybe he saw something.
Left something in here
for me to see.



The film's ancient, but if
I can get *anything* out of
the exposures...



A hint. A clue. A miracle.



Anything.







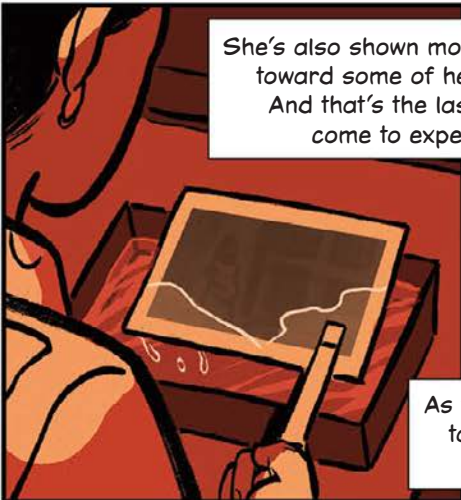
But we've noticed some behavioral changes this semester.



She's always been a little quiet in class, but lately she's been disengaged from the material. We've all caught her falling asleep as well.



She's also shown moments of hostility toward some of her classmates. And that's the last thing we've come to expect of her.

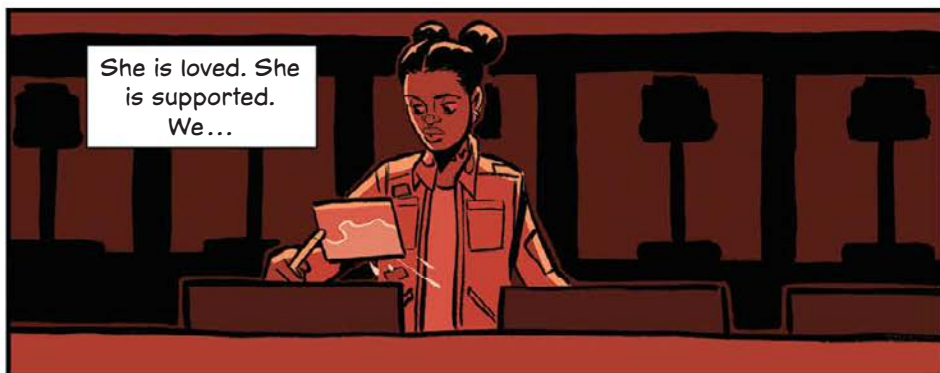


As things are now, Artie's going to struggle when she starts high school next year.



I don't think she's any different from all the other students here, figuring themselves out.







We have a...

...a whole family of people who care about my daughter.



Why are we doing this?



It's our fault that Artie was in danger. We need to make amends.



Mrs. Irvin didn't look like she wanted to see us. Like. Ever again.

I appreciate your optimism as always, T.



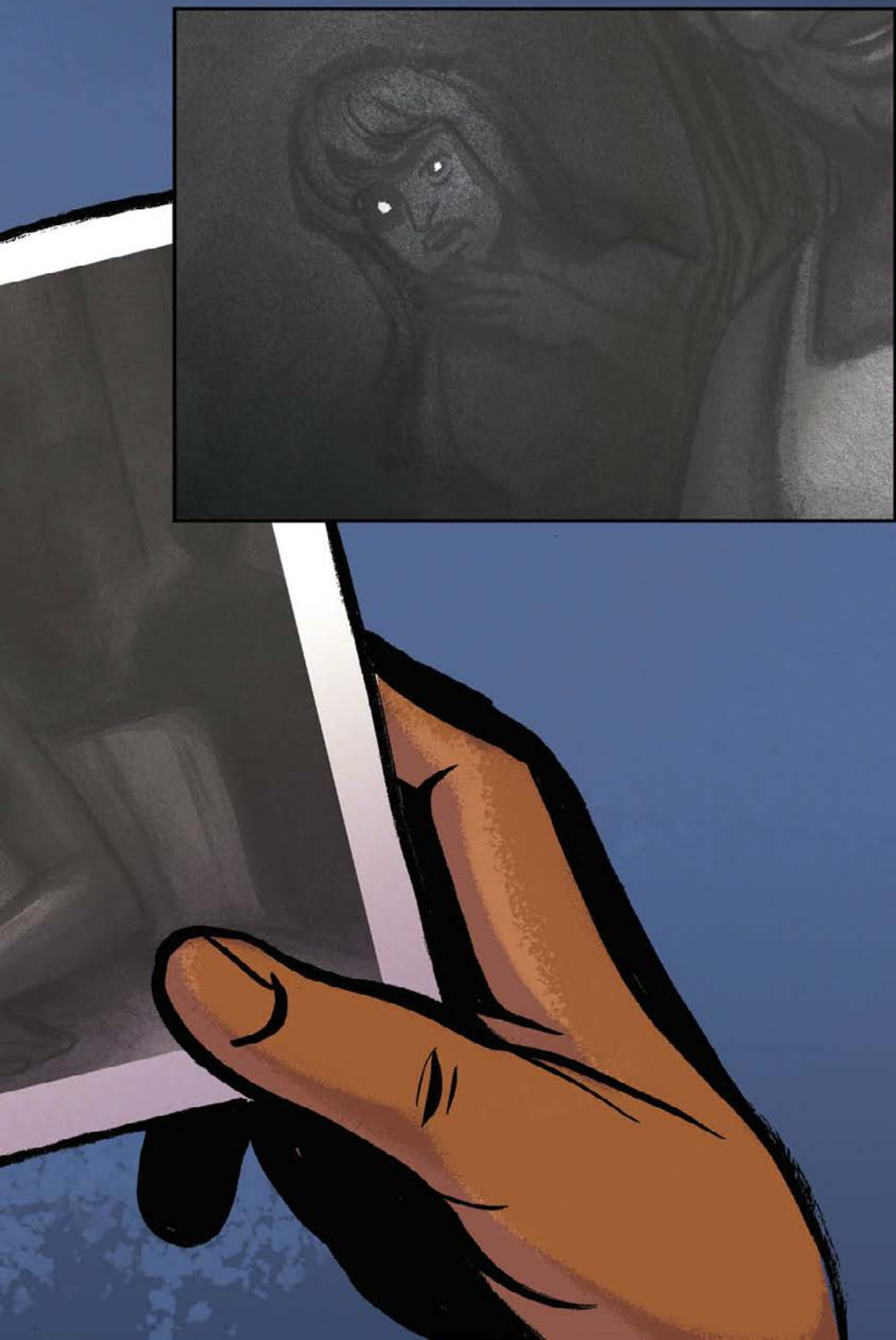
Has she returned any of your calls?

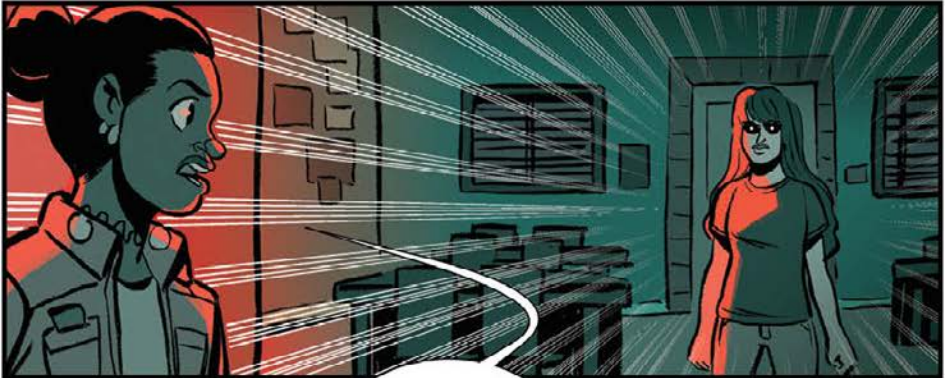
...No.



We still need to try.











Around the time we came for your mother, there was a lot of fighting *among* vampires too.



Violence for the sake of violence. Many died.

Which meant many more would rise and keep up this... *stupid cycle*.



Along with those closest to me, I retreated. Sat and watched while the others continued killing each other.

It changed us, seeing that. We wanted to evolve. Be something better.



So we learned to resist the bloodlust. Stop the hunting.



And we spent a lot of time trying to rectify all the hurt and pain.



But a few months ago... a member of my coven was caught in the violence.

And he was the one that drained your father, all those years ago.







CHAPTER NINE











Where's my dad?

Nowhere!
I drained him.
He's gone.

But you said—

Artie.
I lied, okay?
It's kinda what we do.



After I killed your father, the rest of my coven gave up on catching your dear mom.



Moved onto easier food.
More humans.

Not as appetizing as wolves, obviously, but hunting you guys can be such an ordeal.



I'd gone out on my own, roaming coast to coast.

And then, one day, I was woken by the most interesting howl.



Your howl. It sounded young. Strong. And just the tiniest bit... human.



And I just had this huge hunch. I had to check it out.



And soon, I found you again.







Stop embarrassing yourselves and catch her!

We need to finish this.





Your mom
taught you some
moves.

But I
couldn't help but
notice that you
didn't shift.



You can't,
can you?

Shame. I'd
expect more
of Loretta's
daughter.



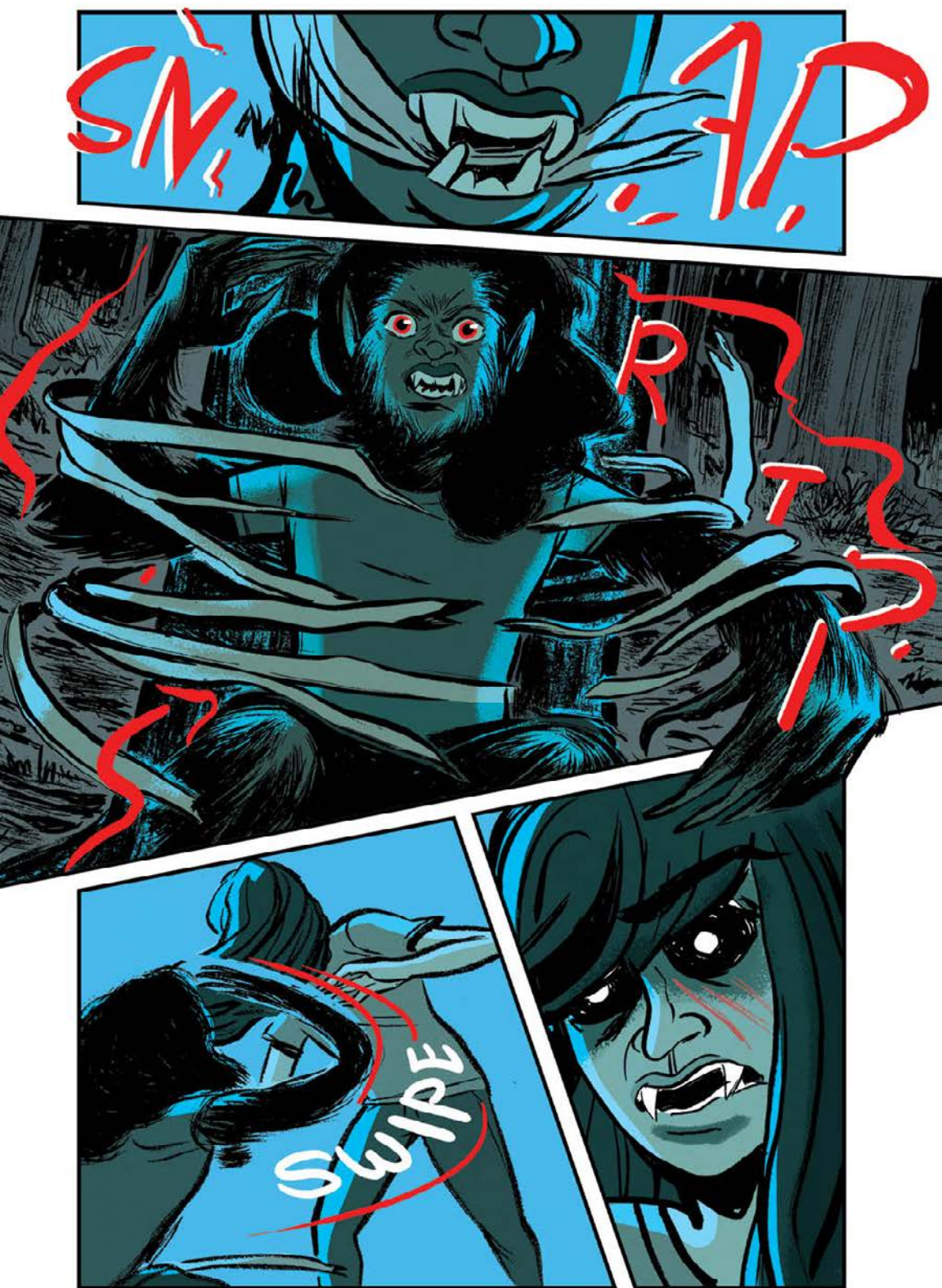
All that fear.
You look just
like your father
did that night.



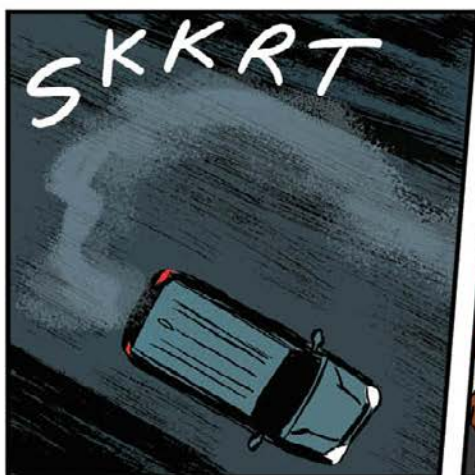
Right
before I...



He did his best.
Which was pathetic,
really...



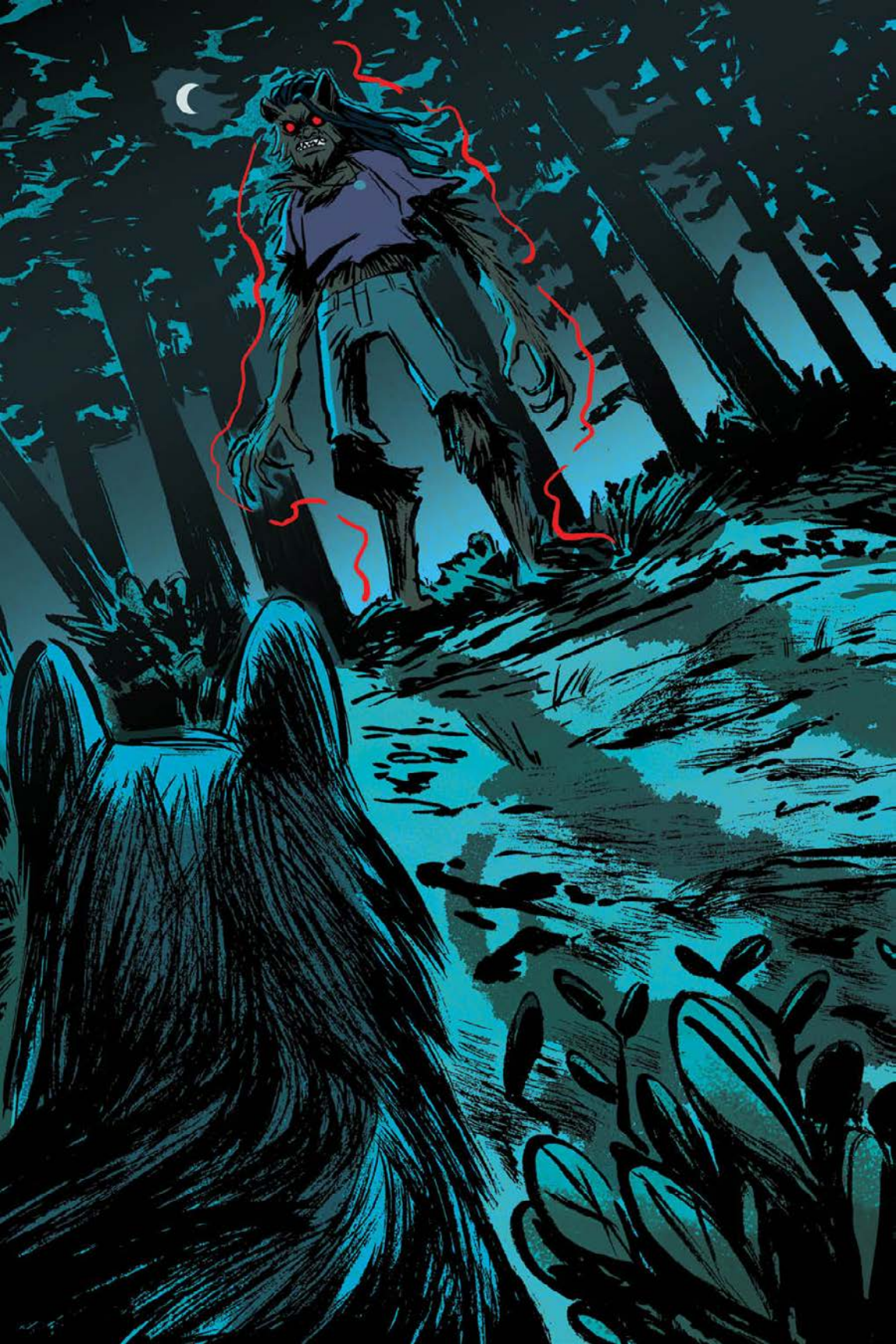
















You.
You're the
ones who killed
my husband,
aren't you?





LORETTA!
NO.

You can't.

HUFF

HUFF



SHE'S THE ONE WHO
DID IT. I CAN STILL
SMELL KELLY ON HER.



Then you know
what happens if
you kill her!

You can't.
You can't do
that to him.

HUFF





CHAPTER TEN









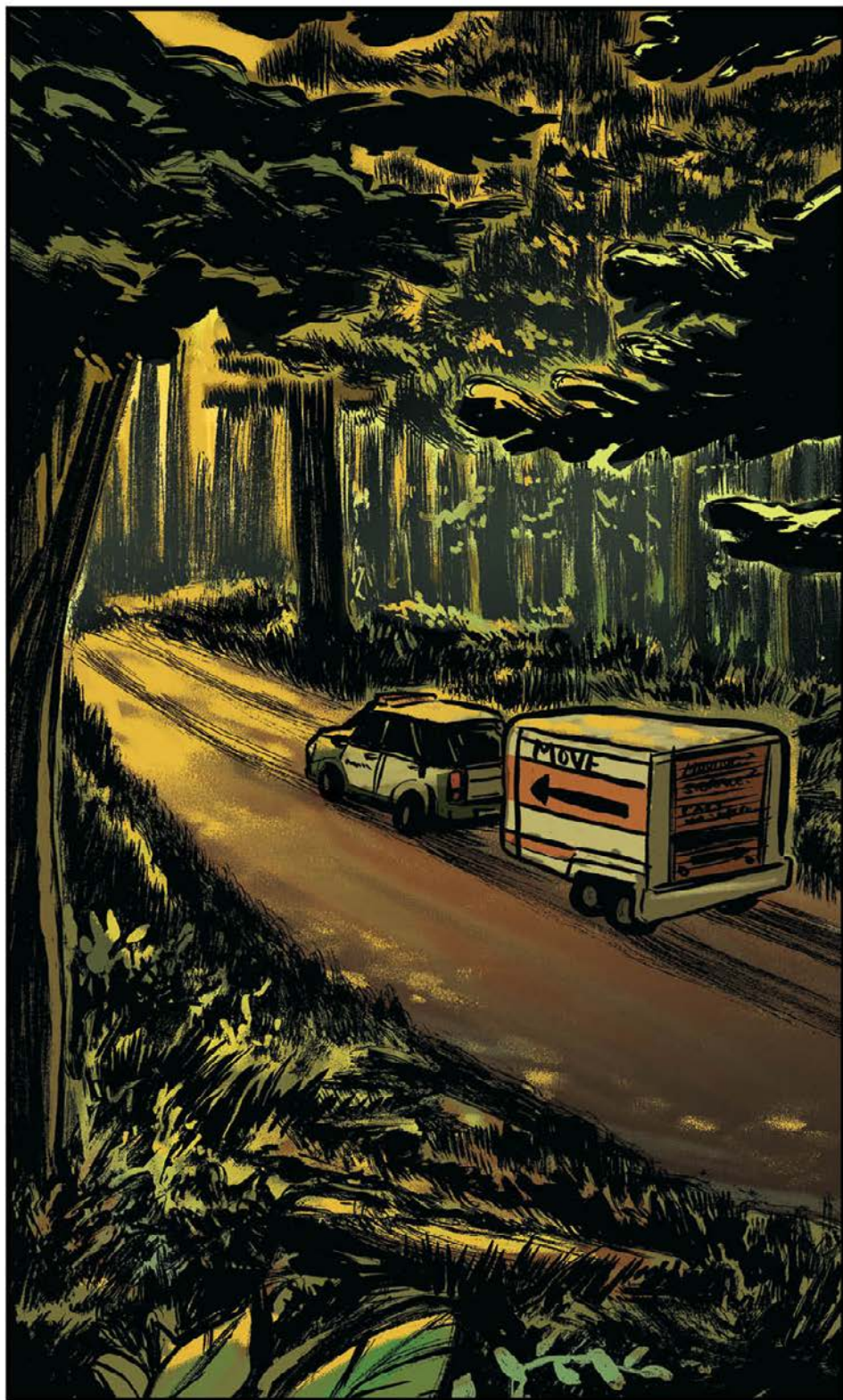




June

























Now that you
have shifting down?
You're gonna be
unstoppable.

And it came
so quick to you!
For a late bloomer
and all.

Ha, thanks.

Yeah. I mean,
after the year
I've just had...

...nothing's
holding me
back.



Why is your
mom staring at
you like that?

Oh god.



Yup, okay,
I'm freaking her
out now.

HA HA

We get it. You're
proud. We're
proud too.



She's come
a long way.



CLINK



I'm sorry
that I thought you
were bad for us.
For Artie.

She needs this.
I was too scared
to see it. Selfish,
maybe.



And I didn't
realize how much
I need it too.











THE END



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book would not exist without the efforts of countless people. Thank you to Mary Jane Begin, for her mentorship and enthusiastic support of my weird little story at its earliest stages. To Jennifer Linnan, for believing in Artie and becoming her champion. To my editor Greg Hunter, for his copious amounts of patience and expertise, and for making this book even better than I ever thought possible. A huge thanks to Kimberly Morales and everyone at Lerner who worked tirelessly to bring this book into the world in its best form.

An immense thank you to my incredible army of flatters and assistants: Mercedes Catarina Acosta, Laura Arce, Cynthia Yuan Cheng, Umaimah Damakka, Desolina Fletcher, Beniam C. Hollman, Ryan LeCount, Mikhaila Leid, Monica Nguyen-Vo, Emry Peterson, Amara Sherm, Kimberly Wang, Jasmine Walls, S. Allise Wilson, Shannon Wright, and Juliana M. Xavier.

Thank you to my family, both biological and chosen, for always having my back. To my parents, for their endless pep talks (and to my mother, for eagerly reading every bit of script that I shoved at her along the way). There are far too many friends to name here, but to everyone who has offered a kind word to me over the course of making this book: Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you to the trees, and all that lies within them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olivia Stephens is a graphic novelist, illustrator, and writer from the Pacific Northwest. *Artie and the Wolf Moon* is her debut graphic novel. She has illustrated for a number of publications, including the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, and *FIYAH Literary Magazine of Black Speculative Fiction*. Olivia graduated with a BFA in Illustration from the Rhode Island School of Design. When not drawing, she enjoys eating spicy foods and losing her voice at rock concerts.

Photo by Melinda Stephens



OLIVIA STEPHENS

is a graphic novelist, illustrator, and writer from the Pacific Northwest. *Artie and the Wolf*

Moon is her debut graphic novel. She has illustrated for a number of publications, including the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, and *FIYAH Literary Magazine of Black Speculative Fiction*. Olivia graduated with a BFA in Illustration from the Rhode Island School of Design. When not drawing, she enjoys eating spicy foods and losing her voice at rock concerts.



Jacket illustrations © 2021 by Olivia Stephens
Jacket design by Kimberly Morales

GRAPHIC UNIVERSE™

An imprint of Lerner Publishing Group
www.lernerbooks.com



"A breath of fresh air. . . . Full of robust characters, dynamic panels, and immersive landscapes, this coming-of-age story of family and the supernatural is one any reader will have a hard time putting down."

—Shannon Wright, *Twins*

"A book of cycles—love, loss, reunion, redemption. Readers will thoroughly enjoy getting lost in the beautifully rendered forests."

—Wendy Xu, *Mooncakes*

"A love letter to the power of family to help you grow, heal, and find yourself. . . . As rich and immersive as a big family dinner."

—Melanie Gillman, *Stage Dreams*

"An absolutely gorgeous, thrilling read."

—Blue Delli quanti, *O Human Star*

"Heartbreaking and heart mending."

—Priya Huq, *Piece by Piece: The Story of Nisrin's Hijab*

**GRAPHIC
UNIVERSE™**

AN IMPRINT OF
LERNER PUBLISHING GROUP
WWW.LERNERBOOKS.COM